

## Exhibit 48

U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services  
*Office of Policy and Strategy*  
Camp Springs, MD 20588-0009



**U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services**

## **Nicaragua as TPS-Designated Country: Comparison of Country Conditions between Initial and Latest**

### **TPS Designation Time Frames:**

- Initial TPS Designation Period: January 5, 1999 – July 5, 2000
- Current Designation Period: January 6, 2024 – July 5, 2025

### **Reasons for Initial TPS Designation for Nicaragua:**

According to Federal Register ([64 FR 526](#)) and the country condition summary of USCIS's 2023 TPS Report to Congress, Nicaragua was designated to TPS country because a natural disaster (Hurricane Mitch) that prevented it from being able to adequately handle the return of its nationals.

### **Reasons for Extension and Redesignation of TPS for Nicaragua:**

Since its initial designation in 1999, TPS for Nicaragua was extended 13 consecutive times under the same statutory basis of environmental disaster until January 5, 2019. On June 21, 2023, DHS rescinded the 2017 termination of the TPS designation of Nicaragua and simultaneously extended the TPS designation of Honduras for 18 months from January 6, 2024, through July 5, 2025 due to ([88 FR 40294](#)):

- Ongoing significant natural disasters and a resulting humanitarian crisis
- Environmental challenges
- Political instability

### **Summaries of Country Conditions of Nicaragua from the Latest Reports of Various Sources**

Nicaragua is generally considered politically unstable with ebbs and flows in its economy, regularly occurring natural disasters, and human rights violations (UN OHCHR, 2024). The country is experiencing political instability and a humanitarian crisis that continue to render the country temporarily inadequate to handle the return of its nationals. Nicaragua is encumbered by the effects of several significant natural disasters, environmental challenges, political instability, and a resulting humanitarian crisis that adversely impact the country's ability to fully recover. While the international community and the Government of Nicaragua helped to repair the damage and destruction left behind by Hurricane Mitch and there were

notable improvements in some sectors, several sectors including housing and infrastructure remained severely impacted (US NESDIS, 2023).

*Governmental Oppression, Corruption, and Accountability*

In November 2024, Ortega proposed a constitutional overhaul that would expand presidential powers and limit fundamental rights. The changes would establish a “co-presidency” with Murillo and empower them to “coordinate” other branches of power. It also appears designed to provide legal cover to many of the government’s systematic human rights violations, such as depriving so-called “traitors” of their Nicaraguan nationality and censoring the press (HRW, 2025; Amnesty International, 2024).

Together, Ortega and Murillo have intensified repression within and beyond the borders of Nicaragua. They have expanded the use of forced exile and citizenship revocation as ways to target critics (HRW, 2025). A United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (UN OHCHR) expert panel conducted a study of human rights in Nicaragua from 2022 through 2023 (UNOHRC, 2024). They found that Nicaragua is a place of surveillance, human rights violations, abuses, and crimes against opponents of President Daniel Ortega’s government. They described the situation in Nicaragua as without any checks and balances. The panel reported reasonable grounds to believe that Nicaraguan authorities have committed crimes against humanity, including censorship, intimidation, expulsions of nationals/citizenship revocation, disappearances of arrested people, murder, imprisonment, torture, rape, and other forms of sexual violence. (UN OHCHR, 2024; HRW, 2025). The Nicaraguan government’s censorship includes shutdown of universities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and censoring the press (HRW, 2025).

In October 2022, an Argentine prosecutor opened a criminal investigation, for alleged crimes against humanity, into Ortega and Murillo under the principle of universal jurisdiction, which allows national courts to prosecute individuals for serious international crimes regardless of where they occurred or the nationalities of those involved. In December 2024, an Argentine judge ordered the international capture of the president of Nicaragua, Daniel Ortega, and his wife Rosario Murillo for the “systematic violation of human rights” (Tico Times, 2024)

*Freedom of Expression and Association*

Human rights defenders, journalists, and critics are targets of death threats, assaults, intimidation, harassment, surveillance, online defamation campaigns, arbitrary detention, prosecution, deprivation of nationality, expulsion and denial of entry to Nicaragua (HRW, 2025). Between January and June, 26 journalists fled the country, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) reported, bringing the total number of media workers who have fled Nicaragua since 2018 to 263. The government has also closed at least 58 media outlets since 2018, the Nicaraguan Platform of NGO Networks [reported](#). Abusive legislation enabled many of the closures (HRW, 2025).

The government has also shut down over 5,600 NGOs, including 1,500 closed in a single day in August. These represent roughly 80 percent of NGOs that operated in Nicaragua, according to the latest available figures from 2018 (HRW, 2025).

*Asylees, Refugees and Displaced People*

In September, the government expelled 135 political prisoners to Guatemala, stripping them of nationality and confiscating their assets, violating international law. Another 46 political opponents remained imprisoned, including some Indigenous leaders. Over 450 people have been deprived of Nicaraguan nationality since February 2023, and many have been left stateless (HRW, 2025).

In September 2024, the National Assembly, controlled by the ruling party, amended the Criminal Code to be able to prosecute in absentia people who are abroad but are accused of committing certain crimes in Nicaragua—a law that could open the door to targeting critics in exile, including those the government has expelled. The assembly also expanded judges' powers to seize assets from defendants and established criminal penalties for “anyone who promotes, requests, or facilitates economic, commercial, or financial sanctions against Nicaragua’s institutions or government officials.” (HRW, 2025).

As of July 2024, 345,800 Nicaraguans were seeking asylum abroad, often in Costa Rica, the United States, Panama, Spain, and Mexico. About 30,000 people are recognized as refugees (HRW, 2025). Nicaragua is no longer a member of the UN Human Rights Council after a UN report encouraging world leaders to address human rights violations by President Daniel Ortega’s government (DemocracyNow, 2025).

*Economy, Employment, and Socioeconomic Status*

Despite being the largest country in Central America, Nicaragua is the second poorest country in the Americas after Haiti in terms of nominal GDP and GDP per capita (US ITA, 2024, IMF, 2025). The GDP grew by 4.6 percent in 2023, from 3.8 percent in 2022, driven by the growth in the services sector, particularly hotels, restaurants, and retail. Growth slowed to 3.6 percent in 2024, with the monthly economic activity index growing 1.7 percent in June 2024, due to reduced production in fishing, livestock, agriculture, and manufacturing. (World Bank, 2025)

Nicaragua has great potential for development but is prone to natural disasters making its reliance on agricultural economies challenging. While trade openness has increased, Nicaragua's exports consist mainly of low-complexity products. In addition, the country is highly vulnerable to external shocks and natural hazards. Its growth potential is limited by low levels of human capital, infrastructure gaps, a volatile business environment, and quality of policy. In 2023, 26.1% of Nicaragua's GDP was from remittances (WBG, 2025). Between December 2024 and January, remittances in Nicaragua decreased from \$484.4 million to \$ 448.2 million (Trading Economics, 2025).

The overall employment rate reached 66.9% in the second half of 2023, close to pre-pandemic levels, due to sustained growth, lower inflation, and increased remittances. The employment rate for women (54.9% in June 2024) has increased in recent years but remains well below that for men (75.9%). Poverty (US\$3.65/day 2017 PPP) is estimated to have declined to 12.5% in 2023 from 13.1% in 2022. In 2023, the unemployment rate in Nicaragua was 4.8% and the youth (ages 15-24) unemployment rate was 9.5% (US CIA, 2025).

#### *Environmental Conditions and Sustainability*

In 1998 Hurricane Mitch hit reached Nicaragua as a category 5 hurricane, which is the second strongest October hurricane on record. Nicaragua experienced widespread heavy rain and severe flooding, resulting in approximately 2,500 dead, 885 missing, and \$1.3-1.5 billion extensive damage to its transportation network, housing, medical, and educational facilities, water supply and sanitation facilities, and the agricultural sector from landslides and flooding which it is still rebuilding in 2025 (NOAA / NESDIS, 2023).

Nicaragua continues to suffer from the residual effects of Hurricane Mitch, and subsequent disasters have caused additional damage and added to the country's fragility. "In the last 20 years, Nicaragua has been hit by major, extreme weather events such as Hurricanes Mitch in 1998, Beta in 2005, Felix in 2007, and most recently by hurricanes Eta and Iota in November 2020 ... The economic, social, housing, and infrastructure losses have been devastating for the region." In addition to hurricanes, Nicaragua has also been impacted by other hydrometeorological events and is also one of the countries in the Dry Corridor of Central America. These environmental shocks have affected conditions throughout Nicaragua resulting in deaths, damage to homes and infrastructure, and loss of crops throughout the years. In addition to the numerous environmental disasters following the 1998 hurricane,

The country's most recent natural disaster was Tropical Storm Sara in November 2024. In Nicaragua, there were up to 6 inches of rainfall that led to flooded streets and rivers as well as landslides. An estimated 5000 people were evacuated from their homes. It is estimated that about 1,800 homes were damaged. There were two reported direct fatalities from Tropical Storm Sara (Kelly, 2025).

Nicaragua has gone from having an energy crisis between 2005 and 2006 to having two geothermal power plants. Located on the Pacific Ring of Fire, Nicaragua has a high geothermal potential due to the heat from its volcanoes (Reyes Susano, 2024).

#### *Safety and Security*

Nicaragua has a tier 3 rating for trafficking in persons, which is the lowest rating given by the U.S. Department of State, meaning that the country does not fully meet the minimum standards for elimination of trafficking and is not making significant efforts to do so (US CIA, 2025). Women, children, sexual minorities, and migrants are particularly vulnerable to

exploitation through human trafficking. Traffickers often target people with the most economic need such as those living in rural regions. Human trafficking victims may be lured in by social media sites and subsequently find themselves in forced labor and sexual tourism (US Department of State, 2024).

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